

WABASH RIVER BRIDGE
(Huntington County Bridge No. 127)
Spanning the Wabash River on the
Salmonie Road (County Road No. 200 West),
2 miles south of Huntington
Huntington Vicinity
Huntington County
Indiana

HAER No. IN-61

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Mid-Atlantic Region
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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WABASH RIVER BRIDGE HAER No. IN-61
(HUNTINGTON COUNTY BRIDGE NO. 127)

Location Spanning the Wabash River on the Salamonie Road (County Road No. 200 West), located approximately 2 miles south of the center of the City of Huntington, Huntington Township, Huntington County, Indiana.

UTM: 16.627300.4524340

Quad: Majenica, Indiana

Date of Construction 1885

Present Owner: Huntington County Highway Department
1601 Riverside Drive
Huntington, IN 46750

Present Use: Highway Bridge (Now closed to traffic due to condition.)

Significance: The Wabash River Bridge is a single span pinned Double Intersection Through Pratt (Whipple) Truss which is about 250 feet in length making it the longest single span bridge of this type in Indiana as well as one of the oldest. It is significant that there are only about 35 bridges of this type left in the State of Indiana.

Project Information: This documentation was initiated in October 1987 in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement by the Huntington County Highway Department as a mitigative measure prior to the removal and replacement of the bridge.

Donald W. Ward & Associates
314 North Illinois Street
Monticello, Indiana 47960

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Site Description

The Wabash River Bridge was constructed in 1885 for the Board of Commissioners, Huntington County, Indiana. The local area then, as now, was a predominantly farming area. The river has little commercial value as concerns fishing, but is of some value as a recreational area. The bridge was probably built as a river crossing only with no other use anticipated.

Construction and Alterations

It is not known if other bridges existed at this site prior to the construction in 1885 of Bridge No. 127, but it is very unlikely that there was. It is also doubtful if any alterations have ever been made to this bridge beyond minor repairs to the floor system.

Key Individuals

The superstructure for the bridge was built by the Smith Bridge Company of Toledo, Ohio, but it is unknown if the design was made by them or by another firm. The Smith Bridge Company built many bridges and it can probably be safely assumed that they designed the bridges which they built. The substructure was built by Thomas Slattery of Crawfordsville, Indiana, and consists of cut stone abutments. Nothing more is known of Mr. Slattery.

Construction Techniques

The abutments are cut stone, the trusses are made up of steel and wrought iron members with a timber floor. It can be assumed that some type of timber falsework was used to support the members at the panel points until the pieces were fit together to form the trusses.

Description

The two lane highway bridge is basically as it has been described in previous paragraphs. The steel and wrought iron superstructure is supported on cut stone abutments. The members are connected together by steel pins. The lower chords

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are eye-bolts (probably wrought iron) with the verticals and top chord consisting of built-up rolled shapes. The floor consists of steel I-beam stringers with timber planks and timber block construction. The clear span of the bridge is approximately 251 feet and it has a clearance of about 28 feet above the river bottom.

Historical Significance

a. **Engineering Significance**

The primary significance of the Wabash River Bridge is in regard to its design as a Double Intersection Through Pratt (Whipple) Truss which is a rather rare type of bridge. Also, its age is very significant in Indiana since the area had been settled for only about 50 years at the time the bridge was built. Its identification tablet of cast iron is inscribed:

SMITH BRIDGE Co.

1885

TOLEDO, O.

b. **Cultural Significance**

The bridge has secondary historical association with the early development of that portion of Huntington County which lies south of the Wabash River. This bridge is one of the links which tied the southern and northern portions of Huntington County into a single unit culturally and politically.

c. **Architectural Significance**

The bridge has far less importance from an architectural than an engineering standpoint. The design although varying from the normal common Pratt or Howe truss design was not rare. However, it still remains as somewhat of a landmark in Huntington County.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Iron Monuments To Distant Posterity", Indiana Metal Bridges 1870-1930, Page 143.

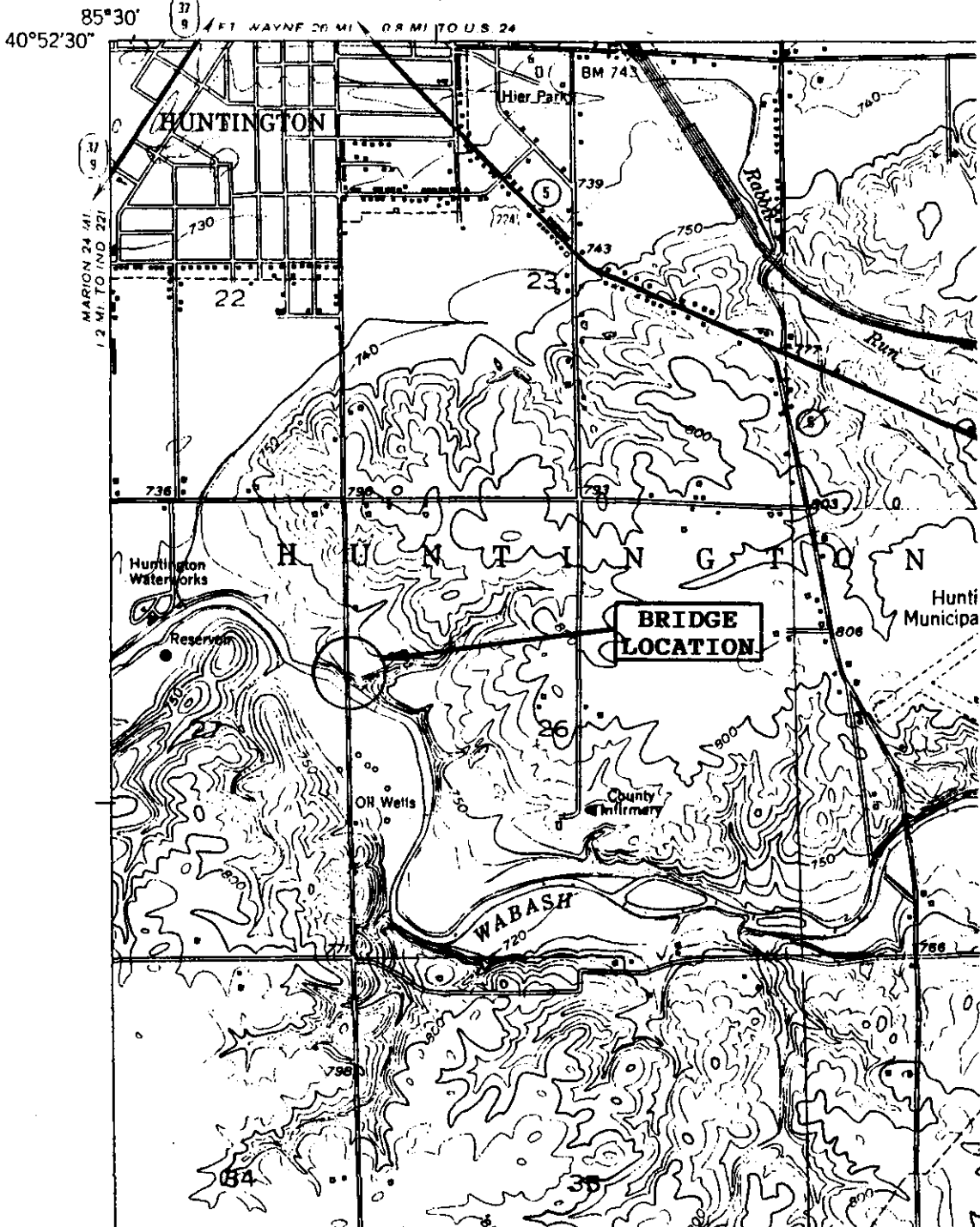
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ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Cast Iron Bridge Plaques to remain the property of the
Huntington County Highway Department.

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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



SITE PLAN